

Ten Thousand Islands

National Wildlife Refuge

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Refuge Facts

- Established: December 1996.
- Acres: 35,000 located in Collier County. Refuge lies in 14th Congressional District of Florida.
- Location: Refuge is located 20 miles southeast of Naples, Florida and south of SR 41 near Goodland, Florida. The refuge headquarters is in east Naples at Exit 15 of Interstate 75.

Natural History

- Refuge is situated in the lower end of the Fakahatchee and Picayune Strands of Big Cypress Swamp.
- Concentrations of wading birds including wood storks, water birds, shorebirds.
- Year round use by manatees, sea turtles (substantial beach nesting by loggerhead sea turtles).
- Refuge is part of one of the largest expanses of mangrove estuary in North America; approx. 30% of refuge (8,000 acres) is mangrove forest, 16,000 acres marine water, 11,000 acres freshwater marshland and other habitat.
- Estuaries are extensively used by interjurisdictional fisheries; renown saltwater fishing area.

Financial Impact of Refuge

- Two persons specifically for refuge; supported by 18 person staff at Florida Panther NWR Refuge.
- Waters and lands account for estimated 50,000 visits annually.
- Current budget: refuge funded from Florida Panther NWR budget.
- Local benefits resulting from government and visitors' expenditures are not accurately known but estimated at \$4-6 million.

Refuge Objectives

- Conserve and protect the wildlife resources, especially endangered species in the refuge.
- Provide visitors with quality recreational opportunities compatible with refuge purpose.
- Permit sustained-yield use and enterprises compatible with the refuge purpose.
- Promote the interpretation and education of natural resources of the refuge.
- Promote refuge cooperation with entities involved with natural and cultural resources within the Big Cypress watershed.

Management Tools

- Prescribed fire.
- Exotic plant control through mechanical and chemical means.
- Education/Interpretation Law Enforcement for resource protection and implementation of public use controls.
- Partnerships: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, National Park Service.

Public Use Opportunities

- Fishing.
- Hunting.
- Wildlife Observation.
- Photography.
- Wildlife Viewing Trail.
- Camping.

Calendar of Events

May: Migratory Bird Day.

September: Coastal Clean-up Day.

October: National Wildlife Refuge Week.

November: Duck hunting.

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Questions and Answers

Where is the new Ten Thousand Islands NWR (TTINWR)?

The refuge is located approximately 20 miles southeast of Naples, Florida, on the south side of Highway 41. The western boundary lies along county road 92. The Gulf of Mexico borders the southern boundary, and the eastern boundary lies just west of Everglades National Park, and FAKA Union Canal in the northern portion of that boundary.

What can I do on this refuge?

The mangrove ecosystem of TTINWR and the greater area are currently used by the public in a variety of recreational pursuits. These activities include sportfishing, boating, bird watching, camping, and enjoying the aesthetics of the area.

Can I see a manatee in the refuge?

Yes, manatees are year-round occupants of the refuge but to see one is sometimes a challenge. In the winter, adjacent to the refuge at the Port of the Islands resort harbor and HWY 41 bridge at the resort area are great places to see manatees.

What other wildlife can I see on the refuge?

A variety of wetland wildlife are seen on the refuge: alligators, wading birds, shorebirds, bald eagles, osprey, loggerhead sea turtles, and dolphins.

What is the best way to see the refuge?

Since the refuge is largely wetlands, a boat is the best means to get around the refuge. Boating is a must for fantastic sportfishing in the backwaters. Boat ramps are located in Goodland, Florida and Port of the Islands Resort on the Faka Union Canal. Commercial boat operators (tour guides) are available in these areas too.